Grant to local bodies

671. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL:
SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Twelfth Finance Commission has recommended Rs. 25,000 crores grant for local bodies between 2005 and 2010;

(b) if so, how much would be the share of Panchayati Raj;

(c) in what manner his ministry is planning to utilize the money that it is going to get;

(d) whether any action-plan has been prepared for this purpose; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In accordance with the recommendations of the Twelfth Finance Commission, Grants amounting to Rs. 20,000 crores are payable to augment the Consolidated Funds of States to supplement the resources of Panchayats, during the period 2005—2010.

(c) The grants payable to Panchayats are released to the Consolidated Funds of States and are not released to or utilized by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj.

(d) and (e) In accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance regarding the release and utilisation of local body grants recommended by the 12th Finance Commission, Panchayati Raj Institutions are to be encouraged to take over the assets relating to water supply and sanitation and utilize the grants for repairs/rejuvenation as also operation and maintenance costs. A High-level Committee at the State level is to approve and monitor the implementation of projects in this regard.

Separate law on Panchayati Courts

672. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to draft a separate law on Panchayati Courts;

(b) if so, what will be the status of Panchayati Raj system; and

(c) the details of the separate law on Panchayati Courts?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No Sir. However, the question of bringing in a legislation to provide for the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas for the purposes of access to justice, both civil and criminal, to the citizens at the grassroots level and ensuring them an opportunity for securing justice is being studied by the Government in the Ministry of Law & Justice.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Financial and administrative powers to PRIs

†673. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government propose to take to provide financial and administrative powers to Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country;

(b) whether positive results have been achieved as a result of the steps taken previously, if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps Government have taken to review the functions of various Panchyati Raj Institutions; and

(d) the action being taken by Government to resolve the problems posed by the representatives of these Institutions?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) In order to evolve a national consensus on the measures to be taken to strengthen Panchayati Raj and ensure that Panchayati Raj Institutions function as institutions of self-government as envisaged in Part IX of the Constitution, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened Seven Round Tables of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj between July, 2004 and December, 2004. At the Round Tables, about 150 points for action, covering 18 dimensions of Panchayati Raj, were formulated by consensus. *Inter-alia*, these cover points of action pertaining to both the Centre and the States, relating to the effective devolution of functions, funds and functionaries to Panchayats.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.